

# Spanning the Gap

## A Ride Down Old Mine Road

By Susan Kopczynski

Continue 0.6 miles and cross the Flatbrookville bridge. Old Mine Road continues to the left, but you have an alternate route here.

To your RIGHT at the bridge, you will follow the Flat Brook upstream through the scenic Walpack Valley, and rejoin Old Mine Road north of Walpack. This is premier trout fishing territory.



At milepost 6 you will pass the large barns of Chado farm, enlarged for the use of Frank Chapot, a member of the United States Olympic Equestrian Team from 1955 to 1974.

After passing Walpack Inn, a privately-owned restaurant, you will see a large stone building on your left, the Jacob Roe House, which now houses the offices of park rangers of the New Jersey District. The pond on the right of the road is part of the adaption of this farmhouse to a summer retreat.

Just down the road on the right are the buildings of the former Walpack Valley Environmental Education Center. The observatory in the field is part of this center. Continue to the village of Walpack Center, which is located on a straight street to your right.



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### Turning Right:



Jacob Roe House, called Deep Spring Farm, around 1900. (Photo courtesy of Patte Haggerty Frato)



Jacob Roe House, now the New Jersey District Office for Law Enforcement. (NPS photo by Ken Sandri)

## WALPACK CENTER

Established 1850

The name Walpack comes from a Lenape word meaning "whirlpool" and referred to one in the Delaware River near the Walpack Bend, where the Flat Brook swirls into the river. This authentic country village began when Isaac and Jasper Rundle opened the first general store there, and it has followed the same pattern of growth and decline as the other villages. One notable upswing occurred when a resident built a creamery nearby in 1911 in response to a revival of dairy farming in the area. The two houses next to the church were built for creamery workers. The ten structures in the village date from 1830 to 1950.

The house next to the post office was purchased about 1850 by storekeeper Isaac Rundle. It is now the headquarters and museum for the Walpack Historical Society (First Rosenkrans House). Other buildings are used for business or as private residences. Of the Walpack Post Office, only a transfer box remains. What you see today, however, is only a portion of a once more extensive community that stretched from the Walpack Cemetery, at the East End of the street, to the top of the ridge.



Walpack Center today. (NPS photo by Ken Sandri)

.Walpack Historical Society maintains offices and a small museum in Walpack Center.

## SIDE TRIPS FROM WALPACK

*To reach BUTTERMILK FALLS, drive 1 mile straight through Walpack Center, down a hill, and across a bridge to the intersection at the cemetery. Turn right. Continue 1.3 miles. On your right is Silver Spray farm, whose pastures in the 1920s were filled with dozens of dairy cows. Continue another .7 miles.*

*Continue 1.9 miles. Buttermilk Falls is on your left. Its parking area is on the right.*

- **BUTTERMILK FALLS**

Tumbling 75 feet, Buttermilk Falls is the highest waterfall in New Jersey. The stone foundation across



Buttermilk Falls. The building on the left is now gone.

the road is all that remains of an early barn. An overshot waterwheel fed water from the falls to a springhouse that stood near the base of the falls.

If you are able, climb the steep stairs to the top of the falls.

*Retrace your route back through the village.*

*Back on the main road (Route 615) and across from the post office box is the entrance to Military Trail, which climbs 1 mile over the ridge to Old Mine Road near Van Campen Inn.*

*Van Campen Inn can also be reached by automobile along a gravel and dirt road branching off today's Old Mine Road. (See the alternate route through Flatbrookville, above.)*

- **MILITARY TRAIL**

The section of the Military Road from Walpack Center to Van Campen Inn has been designated as [Military Trail](#). It covers a distance of one mile each way and takes about one hour round-trip to explore.

There are few easily-visible remnants of settlement along the trail: an occasional foundation, a clearing and orchard, a bit of stone or wood fence, and a few relocated gravestones are all that remain of the farms along this road. Yet this is a landscape that has heard the tramping of soldiers' feet through two wars vital to the nation's survival: the French and Indian War, and the Revolutionary War.

**USE CAUTION!** High grasses along the trail can harbor ticks. Wear long pants and light colors. Use insect repellent, and check for ticks after your hike.

- **VAN CAMPEN INN**



Buttermilk Falls today.



Military Trail today.

## Built 1742

Walpack Historical Society opens this house on Sundays in Summer. Hours may vary. For information call (973) 948-6671

Built and owned by two of the earliest and most prominent local families, the Van Campens and the Rosencrans, this fine colonial home was never intended as an inn in the commercial sense, but it has a long and honorable history of hospitality. By law, certain houses along a major roadway were required to house travelers. During the French and Indian War (1754-1763), the stout stone walls sheltered 150 people against the threat of Indian attack. On the hill above the house stood a small fortification called Fort Johns. During the American Revolution, the inn was often "officers' quarters".

The outbuildings of this "plantation" once stood across the road. They have not survived, leaving the present-day structures somewhat isolated in context. Look for the outline of an old kitchen wing (*shown in the photo*) on the side of the house.



Van Campen House around 1900. The north (left) section was built around 1742 and torn down in 1917. The large right section dates from the 1740s and 1750s. The porch dates from the 1800s.



Van Campen House today, after restoration. The 1800s porch, though not original, has been retained.